

SAWDUST HILL CITIZENS GROUP
Meeting Summary
July 14, 2004

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held at Jones Tree Farm on NE Sawdust Hill Road near Poulsbo. Ray Serebrin opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming. He acknowledged the attendance of Representative Phil Rockefeller and Kathy Brown of Commissioner Endresen's office, and indicated that Representative Beverly Woods would be arriving at about 7:30. Ray introduced Lynn Hakes, the WSDOT project manager, and turned the meeting over to WSDOT. Lynn introduced the other WSDOT project team members who were also present at the meeting, Yvette Liufau, John Donahue and Vicki Steigner.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Vicki Steigner, WSDOT Assistant Planning Manager

Vicki gave an overview of what a Route Development Plan (RDP) is and the process WSDOT uses to prepare an RDP. State Route 3 was chosen because of safety and congestion problems along the route. There are two high accident corridors within the project limits. Accident history including types of accidents and times of the day accidents occur would indicate that congestion is a major contributor to the accident rate.

An important element of the RDP process is public participation. Participation is invited through membership on the stakeholder committee, and through public meetings during the course of the study. The stakeholder committee is made up predominantly of members of the community who have an interest in transportation related issues, including representatives from local jurisdictions such as Kitsap County and City of Poulsbo, emergency responders such as Poulsbo Fire Department, Kitsap County Sheriff, and Washington State Patrol, bicycle clubs, Tribes, business owners, and others. Public meetings are also held during the process to allow for direct input from interested citizens. The meeting attendees nominated Ray Serebrin to be their representative on the stakeholder committee, with Representative Beverly Woods as their alternate.

John Donahue, WSDOT System Analysis Engineer

John provided information to the group on the analysis of current traffic conditions and forecast conditions in the year 2030. Currently SR 3 is operating at a level of service of less than WSDOT's goal, and with no improvements by the year 2030, SR 3 would carry a steady stream of stop and go traffic with little opportunity for those trying to turn onto the route.

Currently the planning team is evaluating three alternatives that were “packaged” from suggestions received at the public meeting and stakeholder meeting brainstorm sessions about how to best improve SR 3. Of the three solutions being evaluated, one emphasizes mobility, one emphasizes access, and one is an alternative which strives to seek a balance between these two elements. The bypass alternative is not one of the alternatives being evaluated, although, if an alternative is recommended and its development requires an Environmental Impact Statement, the conceptual bypass route would probably have to be one of the alternatives examined through that process. The analysis information about the three alternatives will be shared at the next Stakeholder Committee meeting and the Public Meeting in September.

Lynn Hakes, WSDOT Corridor Planning Team Leader

Lynn explained to the group how the bypass alternative in the area of Big Valley originated. The idea was contributed during the March 24, 2004, public meeting. Lynn researched the idea. This bypass route clearly has a number of things to take into consideration such as steep slopes, wetlands, wildlife habitat, etc. This would mean a significant change to the highway system and would require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The cost of an EIS is estimated to run between \$4 and \$6 million and is currently not funded.

Lynn returned the meeting to Vicki Steigner, who took comments and answered questions while Lynn and John recorded the concerns to take back to the Stakeholder Committee.

CITIZEN COMMENT THEMES

Environmental concerns such as:

- Impacts to wetlands
- Aquifer Recharge areas would make the bypass difficult to build
- Poulsbo’s watershed would be affected
- Port Gamble watersheds would be affected
- Wildlife would be impacted
- Wildlife habitat would be impacted
- Salmon restoration project in Big Valley would be impacted
- Steep slopes would make it difficult for trucks to drive
- Washington Conservation Commission in the last 5 years has spent \$111,000 on projects in the Big Valley area. Conservation easements should be there for a 10-year timeframe.

Land Use concerns such as:

- Area is currently used for recreation
- Desire to preserve the quality of life
- Rural and beautiful land would be destroyed

- Concerns with noise if a highway is put in Big Valley
- Property owners paid a certain price for equestrian area and people living on SR 3 paid to live on a highway.
- Preservation of historical homes along the bypass route and at Port Gamble
- Pope Resources has a logging road that would be perfect for the route
- Should WSDOT put a highway on the most scenic area?
- What price would WSDOT pay for land to build a bypass?
- The bypass would impact Snyder Park
- Price of real estate has already been negatively affected by the bypass idea

Traffic concerns:

- Big Valley Road traffic is increasing and safety is decreasing
- Lots of locals use Big Valley as an alternate route to SR 3 already
- Improvements to SR 3 will alleviate traffic problems on Big Valley
- Need a separate lane for bridge traffic

Study Process concerns:

- How can the bypass idea be taken out of the study?
- If WSDOT widens SR 3 to 4 lanes, what happens when traffic ends up at the Hood Canal Bridge, which has 2 lanes?
- Best thing is to get involved with the study and prove it in or out—will this get rid of the idea for good?
- Process seems imbalanced and unfair if anyone's suggestion can get on the list of alternatives, but to get off the list is voted on by Stakeholder Committee members. Especially when no one from Big Valley was present at the 1st public meeting.
- Will the bypass come up again 3 or 4 years from now when an EIS is done?
- Why spend \$100,000 for an RDP to fix traffic on SR 3 without fixing the Hood Canal Bridge?
- Is the Stakeholder Committee Meeting open to the public?

Miscellaneous Questions and Comments:

- Is WSDOT planning to expand Bond Road to 4 lanes?
- SR 3 RDP website is hard to find
- Will be a terrible conflict if WSDOT builds a bypass
- The bypass is a bad policy idea
- Bypass is an old idea
- All the bypass would do is move the problem from one area to another
- Has WSDOT imposed Eminent Domain at this kind of a scale?
- Does WSDOT currently own right-of-way on SR 3 for 4 lanes?

- What's the capacity 25 years from now on the Hood Canal Bridge?
- What's Pope Resources plans for future development? And what's their position on the bypass?
- Short bypass between SR 3 and Port Gamble Road crosses Pope Resources and other properties
- The bypass would hurt tourism
- Light industrial uses on SR 3 would move to the bypass area